

The Massachusetts 9/11 Fund, Inc. | 470 Atlantic Avenue, 4th Floor | Boston, MA 02110
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15th Commemoration



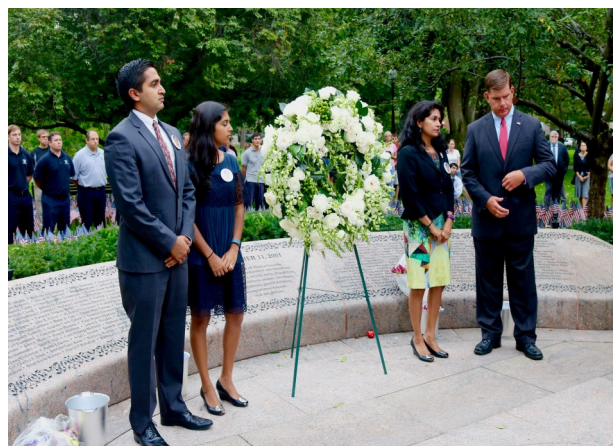
September 11, 2016, was commemorated as a milestone anniversary by our community. Combined with falling on a Sunday, well over 200 of us from near and far attended the various events in Boston. We gathered as always for the Wreath Laying, Reading of the Names, Commemoration Observation, and the Family Reception at the Taj hotel. Again this year, we held a Closing Ceremony.

The sky was gray and the air damp, but the rain held off as Teresa, Michelle and Joseph Mathai laid the customary wreath with Mayor Walsh at the Garden of Remembrance 9/11 Memorial in the

Boston Public Garden. Mayor Walsh spoke briefly. In recognition of the milestone, Candy Altman, MA 9/11 Fund Board Member Emerita, delivered the remarks reprinted on page 3. Candy was instrumental in transforming our memorial from vision into reality, for which our community will always be grateful.

The Reading of the Names ceremony was moved to the House Chambers in anticipation of rain, and rain it did!

The Commemoration Observation was intimate as always despite overflow attendance and the lengthier than usual program. Peg Ogonowski Hatch spoke for all of us as Emcee. Eric MacLeish, MA 9/11 Founder and Board Member Emeritus and Marty Meehan, former Representative for the 5th Congressional District, remembered their experiences supporting



The Mathai Family lays the wreath with Mayor Walsh

families in the days and months following the tragedy. Faith Arter, MA 9/11 Fund President, recognized the outstanding contribution of Teresa Mathai, who now lives in California but remains a steadfast member of the Family Advisory Committee.

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In Memoriam

Senator Edward M. Kennedy

Loretta W. Kowal

The video montage was further enhanced this year. You can view it by clicking on the link on the Annual Commemoration page (<http://www.massfund.org/annual-commemoration-2/>) of the MA 9/11 Fund website.

Special attendees throughout the morning included Governor Charlie Baker, Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito, House Speaker Robert DeLeo, other state dignitaries, and Mayor Marty Walsh. We thank them all for their ongoing involvement with the community.



Board President, Faith Arter, with the FAC, presenting to Teresa Mathai

The reception program included a special presentation to Teresa Mathai and another call for participation by family members in the evolving 9/11 Education Program which is covered in a separate article on page 6. The documentary developed in support of the Education Program was available for viewing in a separate room from the luncheon.

Following the reception, family members were invited to return to the 9/11 Memorial for the Closing Ceremony. Karin Charles welcomed back Father John Connolly and Superintendent-in-Chief of the Boston Police Department William Gross, who both offered heartfelt prayers and uplifting messages of hope and endurance. As bagpipers played, we laid white roses on the memorial. Many then chose to mill around and chat or reflect on the day, taking the opportunity to gently wind down from the intensity of remembering loved ones.

2016 Madeline Amy Sweeney Award

The Madeline Amy Sweeney Award for Civilian Bravery was created in February 2002 in honor of Amy Sweeney, an American Airlines flight attendant who died on September 11, 2001. The award is presented annually on September 11, to citizens of the Commonwealth who have displayed extraordinary courage, bravery, and heroism without regard for personal safety in an effort to save the life of another.



Representative Shaunna O'Connell, Rosemary Heath, Speaker Robert DeLeo

While George Heath was dining with his wife Rosemary at Bertucci's in Taunton on May 10, 2016, a man wielding a knife entered the restaurant and began stabbing patrons and employees. In an act of extraordinary bravery and with complete disregard for his own safety, Mr. Heath grabbed the crazed murderer, shielding a pregnant woman from the knife-wielding, out-of-control man after he stabbed her. Mr. Heath gave his own life to save her and her unborn child from being brutally murdered. The award was presented posthumously to George Heath.

15th Anniversary Commemoration Candy Altman's Remarks

"The heart of Boston is in these magnificent gardens." Those were the words of the late Senator Edward Kennedy in September 2002, as we all stood here to announce the building of a permanent Memorial to the Massachusetts victims of September 11th. Our beloved Mayor Tom Menino said on that day "the Public Garden is one of the most beautiful parts of our city"...and he said, it was so fitting that this be a place of peace and remembrance for the families for years to come. How pleased they would both be today that we are standing here, acknowledging that their vision has endured. That this spot, built with the love and tears of the Massachusetts 9/11 families, would bring peace and reflection to multiple generations. Reflection for family members and their friends, still pained by the terrible loss of that day, with no graves to visit. But also to thousands of people visiting the Public Garden. People who can read and touch the names of those lost, who can reflect quietly in a place of beauty with a shared sense of community.

The Friends of the Public Garden put their trust in you, the families...in designer Vic Walker and Parks Department leader Bernie Lynch...in city leaders like the late Justine Liff and Mayor Menino to create something enduring...something meaningful and respectful.

When we dedicated this sacred space in 2004, Poet Laureate Robert Homer joined us. The inscription from his poem on this space reminds us why it was so important to honor your loved ones in a place that inspires love and beauty.

*"Time touches all more gently here,
here, where man has said, No:
trees and grass, and flowers will remain;
where the first-born sometimes sees
his father's father's eyes
reflected in the shallow pool;
feels an ancient heart beat
in the palm of his hand
pressed against a willow;
and seeking comfort, seeking shade
lies beneath the golden leaf elm
watching swanboats glide in season."*

I hope as we reflect on this 15th anniversary, that this space has been that place for you, and that it remains so for generations to come. Senator Kennedy knew the power of this space and said in 2002,

"They will forever be remembered because as long as there is a Boston, there will be the Public Garden."



Candy Altman
Board Member Emerita

Events

Mass 9/11 Fund Sponsors Family Outing to Red Sox Game

Another great day was enjoyed by those that attended the Red Sox game on Father's Day. Thirty family members attended this fun-filled day at Fenway. The Sox played the Seattle Mariners, and although they lost 2-1, we were happy to support our favorite team on this beautiful sunny day!

Odyssey Cruise

July 17 dawned sunny and warm, a perfect day for a boat trip without a destination, and so it was that 40 family members, led by Captain Alyse Mazerolle, enjoyed a Boston Harbor Cruise on the luxurious Odyssey yacht.

We gathered on the dock and were directed up the gangplank and to the Admiral's Lounge private function room, where we enjoyed a sumptuous buffet. Everything was beautiful and delish. Let's just say that everyone ate at least as much as they would on a holiday.

Most of the outing was spent on deck as the Odyssey made its leisurely circuit of the harbor. The weather was gorgeous, the breezes soft, and the ambiance therapeutic. Check out the pictures below of family members enjoying themselves and each other.

The cruise afforded us the opportunity to de-stress from thinking about the upcoming anniversary while socializing with other family members, both new friends and old. A fabulous day was had by all. Feedback was so positive that another cruise event—coinciding with Sail Boston Tall Ships 2017—is in the works. We will be cruising among the magnificent tall ships that are coming back to Boston.

The date is set for June 18, 2017, and tickets will go on sale on a first come, first served basis sometime in March, 2017. We will keep you posted!



Matt Sellitto, Loreen Sellitto, and Marie Jarka



The Gay Family

Turkey Drive Day of Service

Family members and friends offered helping hands at Catholic Charities' Thanksgiving Turkey Drive under the expert direction of Beth Chambers. There were actually two events. The Dorchester drive took place on Saturday, November 19, a beautiful, unseasonably warm day. On Monday, November 21, we braved blustery cold weather in Brockton.

Volunteers registered recipients and distributed turkeys and bags of food on walk-through and drive-through lines. A "cool" mix of people served 1300 families on Saturday and 600 on Monday.

We all want to enjoy Thanksgiving, and this annual project ensures that others can enjoy a lovely Thanksgiving meal with their families just as we do.



Karin Charles, FAC Chair and Beth Chambers of Catholic Charities



Sally White, FAC



Family member Sheri Gay

Upcoming Service Events

Catholic Charities Annual Gift Giving Event

On Wednesday, December 21, Catholic Charities South holds its annual gift giving event. Six hundred children have been signed up in advance by their parents, who are assigned shopping appointments. At the event, parents can select age-appropriate gifts and are also given wrapping paper to use at home. Great care is taken to make this experience as dignified as possible.

Volunteer staffers are needed on Tuesday, December 20 to help set up rooms, and Wednesday, December 21 to register parents on arrival and man the shopping rooms. There is a room containing gifts for children newborn to 3 years, another for children 4-7 years, and so on, and also a room for sports equipment. You can volunteer for as many hours as you are available, as any help is appreciated. Shifts are filled as people volunteer. Lunch is provided.

Please contact Karin Charles at karin.charles@massfund.org if you'd like to help out with this service event.

And whether or not you can help in person, contributions of unwrapped toys are greatly appreciated.

Faces of Remembrance Project

Gina Johnson is still hard at work, drawing the portraits of our loved ones. Unfortunately, she had an unexpected delay over the summer but has resumed work and is making headway. There is no date yet in place for expected completion, but we will be sure to keep everyone posted and let you know as soon as we hear anything. We are also working on securing a place to exhibit these wonderful portraits for the families and public to view.

Education Committee Update

We are moving along and making progress with the Education Program. To date, we have presented at three high schools and are in process of meeting with many more. We have a team of family members who are currently making contact with area high schools to offer presenting our educational program to students, most of whom were not alive when 9/11 happened. Overall this seems to be well received and we are looking forward to educating students about the tragic day that has affected our country so deeply.

FAC Corner

The Family Advisory Committee Needs You!!

The FAC represents you, the families, so we encourage you to become more involved. Our future meetings for the calendar year will start in March 2017. We meet from noon to 2 pm at our office, located on the 4th floor of the Independence Wharf Building, at 470 Atlantic Avenue, Boston. In the past, some of you who work during the day have helped us in numerous ways, from your homes, without coming in for the meetings. If you are interested in joining our endeavors on behalf of the MA 9/11 community, we remain open to working with you to see what is convenient for your schedule. Your contributions and active participation in our work will bring to fruition the words *"We Will Never Forget."* It has been 15 years since that tragic day we lost our loved ones and sometimes it feels like it was only yesterday! We need to honor our loved ones through remembrance and paying forward through service. We need your help to do so.

If you are interested in attending our meetings, calling in during our meetings, contributing from home, or discussing other options for participating in our working committee, please contact the FAC Chair, Karin, via her email at karin.charles@massfund.org.

Send Us Your Updated Information

We are constantly updating our database to ensure Mass 9/11 Fund communication is reaching everyone. Please send any updates to your information to Alyse at alyse.mazerolle@massfund.org. If you feel you have not been receiving our electronic mail, please put info@massfund.org on your safe list to make sure your spam filter is not inadvertently rejecting mail from us. You always reserve the right to opt out of receiving communication from us.



Aerial view of the 9/11 Memorial with planted flags at Boston Public Garden.